

Montanans Reached through  
MYT Transitions Projects:

Transition Website

Statistics show that the number of visits and pages visited on the site have grown over the past 18 months. The number of visits to the site have gone from 1215 in July 2009 to 2815 in October 2010. The number of pages visited on the site were 1855 in July 2009, increasing to 5,483 in October 2010.

MYT Transition Annual Conferences

There have been 265 individuals in attendance at the 2009 and 2010 Conferences, including MT youth, parents and service providers.

Regional Meetings

Two hundred eleven individuals attended regional transition meetings since their start on May 1, 2010.

Disability Mentoring Day

Fifty-two youth with disabilities participated in Disability Mentoring Day on October 20, 2010.



Students meeting with Lt. Governor Bohlinger on Disability Mentoring Day, 2010



MYT transitions

1617 Euclid Avenue, Suite 1  
Helena, MT 59601

Phone/TDD: 406-442-2576

June Hermanson, Director  
E-mail: mylfune@bresnan.net

Sarah Volesky, Project  
Coordinator  
Email: mytsarah@bresnan.net

EXHIBIT

13

DATE

2-16-2011

MR

485

Montana  
Youth  
Transitions

MYT Transitions

# MYT transitions Projects

The mission of Montana Youth

Transitions (MYT Transitions) is to facilitate and strengthen partnerships between Montana families, private agencies and state agencies devoted to improving the quality of life for youth with disabilities. Funded through DPHHS special contracts, MYT Transitions strives to help develop a seamless system of Montana transition services.

## Transitions Website

Wwww.montanayouthtransitions.org is a website designed to help youth with disabilities and their transition teams have easy access to all of the available transition resources and programs. Many partners have participated in compiling and updating this information, including MT Youth Leadership Forum, Office of Public Instruction, MT Vocational Rehabilitation, UM Rural Institute on Disabilities and many more.

## Annual Transition Conferences

Each fall, MYT Transitions hosts a MYT Transitions Conference. This event is geared toward youth, parents, educators, service providers and case managers as both a forum for establishing productive relationships between youth and partner agencies, as

Montana's youth with disabilities face a number of hurdles to living a life of independence: social biases, disconnected and sometimes deficient services, lack of information, and MT's large and diverse geography. MYT Transitions works to eliminate these hurdles by successfully bringing together available transition services and resources in a variety of venues.

The four components to MYT Transitions include: a transitions website, annual transition conferences, regional transition meetings and

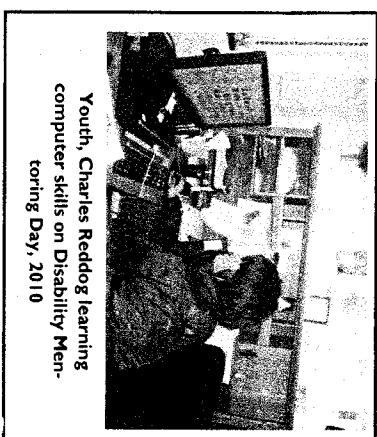
well as offering best practices, materials, and various resources that can improve transition services in MT.

These conferences are often the first time youth with disabilities and their families are able to meet face to face with the wide variety of transition services at the same time, including Social Security, MT Vocational Rehabilitation, post-secondary training providers, independent living services, etc.

## Disability Mentoring Day

Disability Mentoring Day (DMD) is designed to bring students and job seekers with disabilities into the workplace where they can learn about various career opportunities. Through DMD, students or job seekers are paired with a career professional to learn what it means to work in that field or occupation, observe a typical workday, identify necessary skills, and learn about employment prospects. Mentoring is invaluable and beneficial for both the mentor and student.

hosting the annual Disability Mentoring Day.



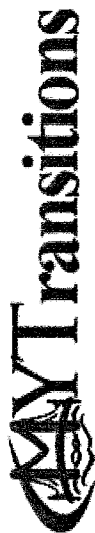
Youth, Charles Reddog learning computer skills on Disability Mentoring Day, 2010

advancing developmental and personal growth.

Disability Mentoring Day is hosted nationally by the American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD) and has evolved to encompass participation in all fifty states. MYT successfully hosted Montana's first DMD in 2010 with 52 participating youth.

## Regional Transition Meetings

One of the things that came out of a previous MYT Conference, was a voiced interest by parents, youth and partners to have regional transition groups. In 2009, five regional transition groups were established to facilitate strengthened partnerships in those local areas. Each region evaluates its particular needs, strengths and unique concerns, and develops goals and projects accordingly.



Montana Youth Transitions

HOME	RESOURCES	PARENTS	PROFESSIONALS	YOUTH	REGION	BLOG
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To improve transition services and increase the number of youth with disabilities who achieve their desired post-school outcomes.

All individuals - with or without disabilities - live, learn, work, play, and participate together in all life experiences.



EMPLOYMENT
HOUSING
TRANSPORTATION
EDUCATION
SOCIAL/RECREATION
MONEY
HEALTH

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**DISABILITY MENTORING DAY  
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 19, 2011**

## **DISABILITY MENTORING DAY PARTICIPANT APPLICATION**

*Return to the Montana Youth Transitions Project, 1617 Euclid Avenue, Suite 1, Helena, MT 59601, FAX (406) 443-3796, ATTENTION: Sarah Volesky, Transition Coordinator. For further information, please call (406) 594-1724.*

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Disability Mentoring Day enables students and job seekers to spend a day visiting a workplace that matches their interests to have one-on-one time with volunteer Workplace Mentors. This is an opportunity to underscore the connection between school and work, evaluate personal goals, target career skills for improvement, explore career paths, and develop lasting mentor relationships. To participate, complete the following form and **RETURN BY JUNE 1, 2011**, to the address above.

### **SECTION I: GENERAL INFORMATION**

LAST NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ FIRST NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE OF BIRTH: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE: \_\_\_\_\_ TTY: \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

If you are interested in disclosing your disability for the purpose of the possibility of being matched with a mentor with a similar disability, you may add that here:

\_\_\_\_\_

### **SECTION II: EDUCATION**

Please check one of the following:

\_\_\_\_\_ High School, attending: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ Graduation Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher/Advisor: \_\_\_\_\_

**SECTION II: EDUCATION (CONTINUED)**

\_\_\_\_\_ High School Graduate

Graduated: \_\_\_\_\_

Post High School Education:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Job Seeker (not currently in school)

Highest level of education attained: \_\_\_\_\_

**SECTION III: DMD COORDINATOR**

Sarah Volesky  
DMD Coordinator  
Disability Mentoring Day in Montana, October 19, 2011  
Transition Coordinator, Montana Youth Transitions Project  
1617 Euclid Avenue, Suite 1  
Helena, MT 59601  
(406) 442-2576 or (406) 594-1724  
[mysarah@bresnan.net](mailto:mysarah@bresnan.net)

**SECTION IV: REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION REQUESTS**

To be able to attend and participate in Disability Mentoring Day, I will need the following accommodations:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Dietary needs: \_\_\_\_\_

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**SECTION V: GOALS, INTERESTS, AND HOBBIES**

On a separate sheet of paper please describe some of the following. This is not required but will help us in finding a workplace that matches your interests:

1. What are your long-term career goals? What kind of work do you hope to be doing in the future?
2. What are you most interested in? What are your hobbies?
3. What kind of work experiences have you had?
4. Describe job-related skills that you have or hope to gain in the future?

Occupation or industry that interests you: \_\_\_\_\_

**For more information about DMD, please call Sarah Volesky, Transition Coordinator, Montana Youth Transitions Project, (406) 594-1724 or (406) 442-2576**

# MT Youth in Transition Conference

Helena, MT

October 3-5, 2010

## Sunday, October 3, 2010

<b>1:30-3:00 PM</b>	<b>Registration</b>
3:15- 3:30 PM	Opening Remarks: Andrew Imparato, American Association of People with Disabilities <b>(Capitol Room)</b>
3:30- 5:30 PM	Youth: Beginning Transition Planning <b>(State Room)</b> Adults: Meet with Andrew Imparato <b>(Capitol Room)</b>
5:30- 6:30 PM	Dinner <b>(Legislative/Judicial Room)</b>
6:30- 7:30 PM	Keynote Presentation: Andrew Imparato <b>(Legislative/Judicial Room)</b>

## Monday, October 4, 2010

*Breakfast on your own*

9:00- 10:15 AM	Concurrent Sectionals <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Money Happiness! Effective Money Management Techniques <b>(Capitol Room)</b></li><li>➤ What is Montana Youth Leadership Forum <b>(Clark Room)</b></li><li>➤ Our "How-to" Guide for Rural Transition: In the Beginning (Part 1) <b>(Lewis Room)</b></li><li>➤ Building Advocacy and Learning Leadership <b>(State Room)</b></li></ul>
10:15- 10:30 AM	Break
10:30- 11:45 AM	Concurrent Sectionals <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Job Experience as the Basis for Transition Planning <b>(Clark Room)</b></li><li>➤ Housing Planning and Choices <b>(State Room)</b></li><li>➤ Doing it My Way—MT's Emerging Leadership Showcase <b>(Capitol Room)</b></li><li>➤ Our "How to" Guide for Rural Transition: Making it Happen (Part 2) <b>(Lewis Room)</b></li></ul>
12:00- 1:30 PM	Lunch <b>(Legislative/Judicial Room)</b> Transition in MT (Anna Whiting Sorrel, Director of Dept. Health and Human Services) Keynote: Youth Panel (Darren Larson and Isaac Baldry) <i>Young adults who are going through or have gone through the transition process—their insights, advice and feedback</i>
1:45- 3:45 PM	Real Life Fair <b>(Lobby Area, work room is in the Gallery Room)</b>
3:45- 4:00 PM	Break
4:00- 5:00 PM	Keynote Presentation: Luca "Lazylegz" Patuelli <b>(Capitol Room)</b>

*Dinner on your own*

## Tuesday, October 5, 2010

*Breakfast on your own*

8:30- 9:45 AM	Concurrent Sectionals <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ iTransitions <b>(Clark Room)</b></li><li>➤ Service Learning and Emergency Preparedness <b>(Lewis Room)</b></li><li>➤ Youth Planning—What Next?? <b>(State Room)</b></li></ul>
10:00- 11:30 AM	Keynote Presentation: Luca "Lazylegz" Patuelli <b>(Capitol Room)</b>
11:30 AM	Checkout—certificates, renewal units, etc.

**COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT**

On behalf of Montana's students with disabilities, the **Montana Vocational Rehabilitation (MVR)** program and

—partners in the Montana Youth Transitions coalition—agree to work together to help eligible students with disabilities effectively transition from school to work.

***WHAT can  
MVR do for  
teachers and  
their students?***

Per this agreement, the MVR representative noted below will be available via phone, during IEP meeting, or in scheduled appointments to:

- Provide information about MVR services
- Provide suggestions regarding vocational planning
- Take applications when appropriate

School staff, per this agreement, will refer students with disabilities to MVR following the guidance noted below.

***WHO to refer:***

Please refer any student who you believe may have difficulty independently preparing for, securing, or maintaining employment due to a physical or mental disability.

***WHEN to refer:***

Students become eligible to submit a formal application for MVR services during the spring preceding the student's exit year. Prior to that time, MVR counselors will serve as consultants regarding vocational planning.

***HOW to refer:***

1. Schedule an appointment for the student to meet with the counselor whose name is noted below.
2. Gather medical and/or psychological records containing diagnostic information. This information is necessary to determine eligibility for MVR services, and will be requested from the school via a signed release.

***MVR Contact  
Information:***

Name:

Address:

Phone:


Signature of School Representative

Signature of MVR Representative

Date:

Date:

Print Form



**GRADUATION DATE!**

## 3 get **READY FOR WORK / COLLEGE**

- I know what I like to do.

MCIS 'IDEAS' interest exploration (or alternative) completed on:

- I know what I do best.

MCIS 'SKILLS' aptitude exploration (or alternative) completed on:

- I can describe my disability & accommodations.

I have participated in or am scheduled to participate in one of the following activities:

MT Youth Leadership Forum

- I have tried work in one or more of the following:

School Based Work Experience

I require help from the following programs to achieve my life goals:

## 2 get **CONNECTED**

Check all programs that apply	Date of initial meeting	Name of contact person	Check if eligible	Check if on wait list
<u>Vocational Rehabilitation</u>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Developmental Disabilities</u>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Mental Health</u>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Independent Living Center</u>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	N/A	N/A
<u>Social Security Benefits</u>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A
<u>Disability Services for Students</u>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A

## 1 get **EDUCATED**

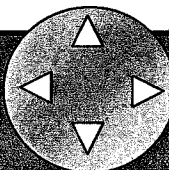
- According to my IEP goals, I need ☐ credits to graduate.

- As of this date, I have ☐ credits.

- I have participated in the development of my IEP. Yes ☐ No ☐

**Start Date**

Student Name



Advisor Name



Dylan VanOverbeck- Rockin' Rudy's

"I thought it was a good experience. I learned about retail. It was a good opportunity to make connections for a possible future job. People there were very nice and answered a lot of questions."

---

Jade Nissen- Harley Davidson

I learned what it was like to work in a motorcycle shop. It was a good experience, but I realized that it isn't what I want to do as a career.

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Sherri Maes-

We had 8 students participate. Each one of the kids had a great experience. They came back excited and students who didn't want to participate this year want to sign up for it next year.

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February 15, 2011

Re: HB 485

To whom it may concern:

I strongly urge you to support this bill and to fund programs such as the Disability Mentoring Day.

I had the opportunity to meet with one young woman who was very interested in theatre. VSA Montana(the state organization in Arts and Disability) is located in the MCT building and I was able to arrange for her to spend a morning at MCT, touring the facility, meeting staff involved in various theatre jobs-lighting, costuming and creation of costumes, prop construction and management, all kinds of backstage work in carpentry, set construction, as well as staging and actual theatre production. She was very excited about job and volunteer possibilities, including the possibilities of auditioning for shows. MCT has a strong commitment to serving all members of our community and this is a superb way for people with disabilities to find a welcoming and accommodating community where people with and without disabilities can pursue their dreams.

The work done by the transitions project includes giving young people with disabilities meaningful opportunities to be a part of the community-as workers, as volunteers, as college students, and as advocates for the rights and privileges we all appreciate as citizens in a democracy.

Your support to build a stronger Montana lies in giving all citizens opportunities and a vote for HB 485 will support that effort.

Sincerely,

Alayne O. Dolson, Ex. Dir.

VSA Montana

Montana State Legislators  
RE: House Bill 485

February 14, 2011

Mrs. Kris Gullikson  
P.O. Box 1437  
Seeley Lake, MT 59868

Dear Montana Legislators,

As a parent with a 19 year old daughter with disabilities, I speak from experience. At our home we embrace a lifelong goal to better my daughter's education wherever we can. As her mother, I was told countless times during her school years that I was an anomaly as the parent who "got involved". One of the ways I "got involved" was simply to keep in touch with the adults in her life- mainly through her teachers at school.

Through that association, and during my daughter's junior year at Seeley Swan High School, we were informed about the MYTransitions project. We traveled to Butte two years ago and to Helena last year. Little did we realize the impact it would have in our lives.

Our daughter, through exposure to the information gleaned from these conferences is a more self-confident and secure individual. She knows there are others that are there to help her achieve her goals and where to go to find them (website). She keeps in touch with the peers she met through the organization and they are her mentors. As a parent, I find the presentations very insightful and the quality of the presenters marvelous. As rural as Montana is - we plan to go every year to keep in touch with those individuals and organizations that make our lives just a bit easier by supplying us with important and up to date information.

We encourage you to continue funding the MYTransitions Conference, expand the funding for the website, and encourage your attendance at some of the fantastic Regional Meetings attended by so many dedicated professionals and parents.

Growing up with a disability is difficult. Having a child with a disability creates its own challenges. I urge you to realize, that any information learned needs repeated and reinforced, so therefore we welcome your continued support and thank you for your dedication to serving the public in the great State of Montana.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Kris Gullikson

**To: Distinguished Members of the Montana House of Representatives**

**Re: HB 485: MYTransitions Projects**

**From: Mary Behr  
Conrad, MT**

**Date: February 15, 2011**

**Dear Members,**

I am writing in support of the Montana Youth Transitions Project (MYTransitions) and encouraging your full, continued support of this group's work. Developing meaningful, innovative transitions for youth with disabilities from high school to adult life takes hard work, a wide basis of knowledge and dedicated cooperation from a wide variety of agencies, family members and personal connections. MYTransitions has done an amazing job at helping families to build those networks, as well as providing in-depth professional development/training for the professionals actively involved in transition support.

There are many challenges that face Montana's youth with disabilities, including societal biases and the lack of information regarding opportunities. With a very small budget, MYTransitions has done an impressive job of disseminating information to people in all areas of Montana, no matter how rural. By using a skillfully coordinated network of agencies, families, case managers, educators and businesses, MYTransitions has been able to reach many youth and families that might have otherwise been overlooked by the system. This ultimately helps those youth toward leading productive, happy, meaningful lives, which is something we all strive to achieve.

I am a Special Education teacher and have been helping with MYTransition projects since it began. I stay involved, both as an educator of youth with disabilities, and also as a member of the MYTransitions committee, because I see how positively it affects Montana's youth with disabilities and their families. I have witnessed youth with a wide variety of disabilities secure job training, employment, and independent living arrangements because they were able to attend the transition conferences and/or regional meetings and access the MYTransitions website, connecting them to individuals and agencies who could support them in their goals. These are youth who would otherwise be living at home, unemployed and discontented.

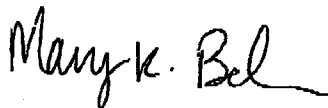
I have visited with many parents of youth with disabilities who have expressed their gratitude that the information from MYTransitions is so comprehensive and not disability specific. MYTransitions is geared toward ALL youth with disabilities and strives toward

providing information regarding ALL types of training and independent living opportunities. It is easy to take for granted that because there are public schools and a MT Vocational Rehabilitation program that people with disabilities are taken care of. The reality is that Montana has really just begun the process of becoming proficient at helping its youth with disabilities prepare successful transitions, and we have a long way to go, in terms of supporting our youth.

MYTransitions is a low cost, effective investment for our state's greatest resource.

I am happy to answer any questions this committee might have and wish you the best during this legislative session.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mary K. Behr". The signature is fluid and written in dark ink.

Mary K. Behr

200 Pendroy Road  
Conrad, MT  
(406) 271-2761

Phyllis, Tom & Travis Van Elsberg  
427 W Maryland  
Deer Lodge Mt 59722

To whom it may concern:

I am writing in favor of continued funding of the MYTransitions project. While I realize times are tough and cutbacks are necessary, I strongly urge against cutting back in the area of education for disabled youth and young adults. I feel this would be a great disservice to youth who already face challenges others can only imagine.

In October we attended the MYTransitions conference held in Helena. We were extremely impressed and hope to attend next year. The wealth of information and support we received is to be commended. My only wish is that this information would have been available to us years ago and hope it will continue to be available families of disabled youth in the future.

My son Travis is 20 years old and has a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder, more specifically "Aspergers Syndrome." He is a graduate of Powell Co High School. His hopes and dreams did not stop with a high school diploma. He would like to be an artist, go to college or be a "Rock Star." Any of these goals will be a challenge and will require the support and dedication of many people. We have met many such dedicated people through the MYTransitions project.

My son is applying for the opportunity to attend MYLF this spring. If he is chosen it will be an invaluable training experience for him. We live in a very small town where resources and opportunities are limited. Please continue funding for this project and give our Montana disabled youth a chance for a bright future.

Thank You  
Phyllis Tom and Travis Van Elsberg

Date: February 15, 2011

To: The Montana State Legislature

Re: HB 485 MY Transitions Project

*Great Falls Public Schools*

From: Kathy L. Reed

*Kathy L. Reed Vocational Resource/Transition Educator*

Good Afternoon;

It has been brought to my attention that House Bill #485, presented by The Montana Youth Transition Project is currently up for reauthorization. I respectfully implore you to fund this project so that they may continue to provide the necessary opportunities for knowledge and personal growth to both professional staff, and Montana's Disabled Youth. I have experienced the powerful impact that their programs have made on my professional life, and the empowerment they have nurtured within our disabled students.

The Regional Transition Meetings I have participated in have contributed greatly to my professional growth. I have gained knowledge beyond what is offered in a pamphlet as to what services each agency can provide and how to effectively access said services. I now have a group of colleagues that I can brainstorm, and trouble shoot my challenges with that are not employed within my agency, but within my professional field. I have gained a better understanding as to how these services providers work in concert with each other to provide the best opportunities for supporting our disabled youth as they transition in to life after high school.

The Transition Website has provided me with instant access to a state wide pool of seasoned professional knowledge for brainstorming ideas, and problem solving regarding community employment, stipend employment, or work experience. The Webinars present information covering topics from how to write transitional goals to case studies on how to set up a work experience for a youth with specific abilities.

Through my attendance at the annual Transition Conference, I have been exposed to national political leaders in the area of disability rights, and have a better understanding of the impact that we have on Washington D.C. I have also been blessed to meet some of the inspirational individuals that have attended the MYLF summer camp. Through their testimonies I have been inspired to seek a higher level of professionalism to help all of my students make their vocational dreams come true. I strongly encourage most of my students to attend the MYLF Leadership forum to develop a stronger sense of self-advocacy.

I have become a more knowledgeable and effective transition educator from the opportunities afforded to me by The Montana Youth Transitions Project. My students are less anxious at the prospect post secondary living, and demonstrating greater excitement at the journey that lies ahead of them. Please support this bill, for the continued growth of our disabled youth.



# Big Sky High School

3100 South Avenue West

Missoula, MT 59804

(406) 728-2401 Fax 549-4616

February 15, 2011

RE: HB485

To Whom It May Concern:

**Trevor Laboski**  
Principal

**Brian C. Fortmann**  
Assoc. Principal

**Nick Carter**  
Dean of Students

I am writing to you in support of HB485. I am the Vocational Preparation II teacher at Big Sky High School in Missoula. Students in my class volunteer out in the community to develop skills needed for the world of work. On October 20<sup>th</sup> about 15 of those students had the opportunity to job shadow for Disability Mentoring Day at a business in which they had interest, to understand the skills needed for employment. Every participant learned things they liked and disliked about the job which enabled them to make an informed decision about pursuing that type of job/career.

Transitioning from high school is a huge endeavor for my students with special needs. One of the tasks that are vitally important to their success is for them to learn to use resources available to help them make decisions for now and in the future. One wonderful resource is the Montana Youth Transition Project found at [www.montanayouthtransition.org](http://www.montanayouthtransition.org) which provides information and additional resources for students, parents, the general public and educators. One activity we do in my classes is a scavenger hunt where the students answer questions about the web-site while learning about resources available to them. This gives my students an opportunity to develop much needed computer skills but also critical thinking skills that will enhance their opportunities for employment in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. I also require my students to fill out the Montana Youth Leadership Forum application for leadership camp offered in July. The Montana Youth Leadership Forum is one of the many links found on the Montana Youth Transition Project web-site. To complete the application, students must learn about their medical history, understand their disability, obtain two letters of recommendation (one from the school and one outside of school), and complete an essay. This application provides invaluable information to the student that can be used for job searching, applying for colleges/vocational schools, and general self awareness. I have had numerous students apply for MYLF and be selected as participants. I've also had several go to camp as participants one year and a mentor/camp counselor the next. The only way to ensure training for our future leaders is to get the word out to the public and the web-site is the key to the Montana Youth Transition Project's ability to reach and help so many people.

Please support HB485 for our future leaders of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

Sincerely,

LanAnn Bryant  
Big Sky High School  
Special Services/ Transition Coordinator  
406-728-2400 ext. 8627 or 406-544-7437



Barb Schiedermayer  
23480 Wapiti Rd  
Huson, MT  
February 16, 2011

Montana Senate and House  
State Capitol  
PO Box 200500  
Helena, MT 59620-0500

February 16, 2011

Dear Montana Legislators:

As a mother of a child with a disability and a professional who works with children with disabilities, I am writing to ask you to **SUPPORT HB 485**.

**The BAD NEWS:**

According to the national Harris Survey (commissioned by the National Organization on Disability), students with disabilities, when compared to their non-disabled peers:

1. Drop out of high school at about twice the rate,
2. Go on to college at nearly half the rate, and
3. Become employed at roughly one third the rate.

I hope you, like me, find those statistics to be unacceptable.

**The GOOD NEWS:**

The **Montana Youth Transitions** project endeavors to change those stats for Montana's 6,700 students with disabilities via innovative and collaborative efforts in the form of a centralized website, regional work groups, an annual conference, and effective job shadowing efforts.

**Please SUPPORT HB 485.** Thank you.

Sincerely,

Barb Schiedermayer

**From:** Laura Coulter

**Date:** Tue, 15 Feb 2011 21:13:26 -0700

**I am a High School-special education life skills teacher from Missoula. I have been teaching for nineteen years.**

**Never before now has there been a deeper need to continue all funding and services in assisting our fellow disabled Montanans' For most-This is all the Disabled have to help them towards becoming/or continue to be contributing members of our society.**

**It is hard times everywhere-especially for our disabled; jobs, accessible living spaces and recreation. Some individuals get put on waiting lists for ten or more years!**

**Teachers, students and the Montana Youth Transitions Project work extremely hard to bridge the gaps between, school, graduation, college, and career.**

**We are the voices for those who can not speak. We fight for those who are too weak.**

**We plead to you on this committee to NOT CUT programs and funding for HB 485! There is too much to loose!**

**Sincerely,  
Laura Coulter**

RE: HB 485

Mr. Chair, Members of the Committee;

My name is Mary Olson, and I live in Missoula, MT, originally from Vida, MT. I am writing this letter today in support of HB 485, as a person with an invisible disability, and as a professional that works with young people with disabilities in Western Montana.

These programs that the Montana Youth Transitions project offers are not just another social service program for people with disabilities to help them get by. These programs offer opportunities for these young people to reach above what is expected of them and live their dreams, just like everyone else. I have seen individual youth with disabilities change after partaking in these programs.

For example, last year in the Missoula area, we placed approximately 21 students with disabilities in the community as a part of Disability Mentoring Day. This is an opportunity for students with disabilities to go into their community and job shadow for the day in their dream job. We don't discriminate against their dream, it could be a greeter at Walmart, or to be a Sports Medicine Physical Therapist. For some of these students, this one day will impact them forever. For example, one young man that we placed wanted to work with a sports physical therapist. We told him that he would have to dress up and look professional to go into that office. He came to school in a suit that day, and when he walked in, he had his head held high and proudly told the other students that he was a physical therapist today. He will get to keep that experience of someone believing in him and treating him like a person and an employee, rather than special ed, forever.

One young lady spent the day at the Veterinarian's office. She scrubbed up and walked into surgery on a cat. Immediately after, she scrubbed out and said that "I don't want to be a Veterinarian anymore!" That's fine! She got to try, and now, she can rule that career out because of Disability Mentoring Day.

We had community members after partaking in the project eagerly ask when it would happen again, because they got just as much out of the experience as the students. They got a valuable lesson that people with disabilities are good employees and that the stigma that has been following them is not necessarily true. This is what I think they must have meant with the statement Win-Win.

The transition website and the transition web conference are in response to gaps that are out there for students with disabilities, and necessary. Students with disabilities spend their high school careers nicely bubble wrapped in a little cocoon that we call Special Education. You have your teachers, your case managers, service agencies coming in for your IEP, telling you what you need, and then giving it to you. Then, you graduate, and it all goes away. These tools that the MYTRANSITIONS project offers is to help these students, basically, to not fall and smack their faces when the bubble wrap pops.

The sad truth is, that there will be a lot more tax-payer aged young people with disabilities out there sitting in their houses on government benefits assistance, not doing anything, not working, because they did not have these transitional support services, information, and opportunities that the MYtransitions project offers if it goes away.

Finally, these statewide conferences offer more than training or information. For me, it is about the connections. I grew up with an invisible disability in Vida, MT, where I was made to believe that things were all in my head, and that I was making up what I was recognizing about myself. I spent all of my high school thinking that it was true, and that can make you feel very alone, especially when you are already alone in a rural community. I didn't actually begin to feel empowered, and okay with that part of myself, until I began going to these conferences, which I happened to fall into for my job. It is incredibly powerful for a young person with a disability in rural areas of Montana to travel to these conferences and realize, I am not alone. There are others like me. I am okay, just because I am the only person like me in my small community, doesn't mean I AM the only one. Please don't take that away from these youth.

Thank you,

Mary Olson

6109 Mainview

Missoula, MT

2-16-11

House Appropriations Committee  
Chairman Walter McNutt

Dear Committee,

I strongly support HB 485.

I am a person with a disability who has experienced the hardships of transition. When growing into a young adult, it's hard to know what you want; let alone what you're capable of despite having a disability. It's a lonely feeling; a feeling that will destroy you if proper support and encouragement isn't given. My mother, my teachers, and I realized this throughout the process. There are a plethora of information and offered resources that may or may not assist a certain youth with a particular disability and a particular skill set. HB 485 offers a streamline and central location to access all needed information. The MYTransition website gives a place for youth, parents, and teachers to explore and plan for a successful transition. The youth transition conference brings youth together to learn about and be excited for life after high school. Disability Mentoring Day allows youth to job shadow a possible career they are interested in and gain a sense of belonging. All of these items will be put into action and sustained by the transition coordinator which HB 485 will fund. This would have made my transition so much easier and would have given my mother a much needed peace of mind.

By supporting for HB 485, we are investing in our youth with disabilities and acknowledging that transition when having a disability is very difficult. Allow all youth with disabilities to achieve a successful transition and become productive citizens who gives back to society. Vote yes for HB 485.

Sincerely,

**Darren Larson**

Darren Larson  
Independent Living Specialist  
Summit Independent Living Center  
700 SW Higgins, Suite 101  
Missoula, MT 59803  
(406) 728-1630 (Voice/TDD)  
(406) 829-3309 (Fax)  
[dlarson@summitilc.org](mailto:dlarson@summitilc.org)

Big Sky High School  
3100 South Avenue West  
Missoula, Montana 59804

October 28, 2010

Dear Tom Campbell,

Thank you for participating in my educational job shadow. I learned many things from this experience such as how to hold a knife correctly, different types of cuts, and how good your food is. The best part of my job shadow was learning that there is going to be a new College of Technology. After I graduate I plan to join the Marines. I appreciate your contribution to the advancement of my high school education and helping me reach my goals.

Sincerely,

Shawn O'Hara

Mack Schaeffer  
11/09/10  
9:30am-11:30  
Blue Ribbon Audio

Disabilities Mentoring Day

Job Shadow Reflection Paper

My expectations before completing my job shadow were that I would be cleaning up the shop and organizing equipment. Three new things I learned about this job were how to use a label maker, how to put in a keyless entry and how to sort and put away shipments. The duties I did throughout my job shadow were working with Kevin May and Ben Crane doing what I had learned during the day. I enjoyed the experience because this is my career choice in life.

Damian McCarty  
October 27, 2010  
12:00pm-3:00pm  
Best Buy

## My Job Shadow Reflection

My expectations before completing my job shadow were that I did not know where the video games were and what a 3-D T.V. looked like. Three new things I learned were how they put the speakers in the cars, how the Wii works and I saw a new version of a fan. The duties that I did throughout my job shadow were that I got to watch the 3D T.V. and I got to know Eric. I enjoyed this experience, but I think the job would be hard to do.



Aaron Felde

11-1-2010

Paxson Elementary

## Reflection Paper

My expectations before job shadowing were that I thought I was going to sit and take notes, but it was much different. Three new things I learned is that kids work great in groups, the kids read amazing in groups, and kids are very interactive if they are put in groups. The duties I preformed were helping the kids with their work, I asked them what they knew about the work they were doing and asked them to explain it to me. I loved this experience. I had a really great time with the kids and I learned a lot of new things.

**Justin Sherman**

**11/9/10**

**9:40-1:30**

**C.O.T**

**Disabilities Mentoring Day**

**Job Shadow Reflection Paper**

I was expecting to watch them cook food and have them explain stuff to us. I learned how to cut with a knife the right way, how much it cost to go to that school, and how much every thing cost. The duties I did was watching them cook food and eating food. It was okay because I have no interests in this area but the food was good.

Kenley Scheffer

10/26/10

9:30 - 2:45

Edge of the World

I did not know what to expect for this job shadow because I wasn't to sure about what I was going to do, I didn't know if I was going to just observe or help clean and stuff. Three things that I learned that I didn't know about this job are, the amount of cleaning, all of the products that they go through, and how few people work there. The duties I performed through out the job shadow are, broke down boxes, swept off ramp, and vacuumed the carpet. I did enjoy this job shadow because I got to stay at a skate shop all day instead of being at school.